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woman's Journal

WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON ON STATE REGULATION OF VICE.

The New York Committee for the Prevention of Licensed Prostitution, after Mr. Garrison's return from his last visit in Great Britain, gave him a reception in the parlors of the "Isaac T. Hopper Home," on which occasion he delivered a most eloquent and powerful address in opposition to State-sanctioned vice, and all social impurity. The address was not fully reported, but the committee have had printed as a leaflet, an excellent abstract from the Secretary's minutes, which is as follows:—

Mr. Garrison said the question we had met to consider was treated by a great many people as indelicate, but nothing that concerns human welfare can be improper to talk about. This evil was not a slight one; it concerned the whole world. The efforts put forth to license prostitution had been feelers to test public opinion. As yet there had been no such attempts in New England, and therefore there was no agitation of the question there. It cost a great deal the other side of the Atlantic to espouse this cause. It was very similar to our anti-slavery movement. He had made Mrs. Butler's personal acquaintance while in England, and felt that she was called of God to do this work. We had no idea with what anxiety the people abroad were looking to this country for aid and sympathy. Here was an opportunity to show whether you will wait for the multitude or take the principle and stand by it. No matter though it seemed fanaticism, every new reform had been branded as visionary.

This licensing of prostitution was put forth as an economical way of sinning—a preservation of health. If one sin may be licensed, why not another—judiciously regulated. To regulate sin! to dare to repeal the moral law! No, it was against God himself. If there were no other reason for this Committee, it was enough that we could be of great help to those in Great Britain and on the Continent who are struggling in the repeal movement. We needed to intensify the moral sentiment against the system. He remembered how his own heart was cheered years ago by going over to England and having the sympathy and co-operation of anti-slavery friends there.

But the repeal of any law was not technically the whole of this question. It means the whole relation of man to woman. It means that guilt should be equally divided. The divine law over us was for all. There was great lack of education on this subject. He had never heard a single sermon preached from the seventh commandment. No clergyman feels courageous enough, and the whole thing is avoided. He thought God had intended this issue to be the means of opening up this question in all its bearings. He felt honored to be invited by the Committee to meet with them. He was heartily in sympathy with them and would do what he could for this most righteous movement. There was a mighty work to be done to raise the standard of virtue in this country. Mr. Garrison closed his remarks by an earnest and impressive appeal to all to labor, remembering that in a fundamental principle we had God with us.

At the first autumnal meeting of the Committee, held on the 1st inst., the President, Abby Hopper Gibbons, in the chair, on motion of Aaron M. Powell, the following resolution in relation to the death of Mr. Garrison was adopted:

Resolved, That it is with deep regret and a profound consciousness of our great loss, that we record the death of William Lloyd Garrison; that, prophetic, fearless, and uncompromising as the champion and deliverer of the negro slave, so was he foremost among his countrymen as an outspoken antagonist of the enslavement of women and degradation of men, involved in licensed. or "regulated" prostitution; that we commend to all the lesson of unswerving fidelity to convictions of duty and the right, taught by his rare example; and, that we hereby express to his children our heartfelt sympathy in their great bereavement,—our joy in their rich legacy of his loving and precious memory.

Ms. A.1.1 v.9, p.38C